

UPDATING COMPUTER FILES

A computer file update distribution technique uses tags embedded within data (such as e-mail message headers) to distribute notification of the existence of more up to date versions of a computer file to peer receivers (such as mail gateways, servers and workstations) of that data that are then triggered to download those more up to date versions. More than one peer along the transmission path of the data will be triggered to perform the update. The computer files may be components of an anti-virus system. The tags may be encrypted to increase security. The tags could include parameters indicative of processing operations (e.g. anti-virus scan options) already applied to the data that in turn influence the processing performed by the receiver. The tag can also indicate whether or not the peer that sent the message would be a source for the update.

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[Figure 4]